

LESSON 1: BUILDING OUR GIRLS ON THE RUN TEAM

The primary goal of the first lesson in the curriculum is for the girls to get to know one another and their coaches. This session includes games and activities that raise awareness of and celebrate the diverse gifts and talents that each girl brings with her to Girls on the Run. A second goal is to begin to share the culture of Girls on the Run – a safe, supportive environment where all girls can be themselves. An additional goal is for the girls to learn about Girls on the Run Identity Cards and energy awards. Finally, the girls receive their first take home goal today. At the end of each lesson the girls will be given a goal that will help them use the concepts and skills learned in Girls on the Run in other settings such as at home or in school.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Tell me about your coaches.
2. Did you meet any new girls today? What are their names?
3. Describe one of the games you played today.
4. Share something you learned about yourself or your Girls on the Run team today.
5. What is an Identity Card?
6. What is an energy award?
7. Do you have a goal to try to accomplish before next time? What is it? (Goal: Think of two more things that make us special and unique.)
8. Let's each name one unique thing about ourselves that we think is special.

LESSON 2: I AM GIRLS ON THE RUN

In lesson 2, the girls are continuing to strengthen their ties to one another as they work to unite as a team. Specifically, they are learning to recognize the power they each have to choose attitudes that help their Girls on the Run team work well together. During the lesson the girls identify areas of challenge and confidence when it comes to their choices. The concept of accountability for one's actions is explored, as is the concept of making decisions with intention. Finally, the girls are beginning to track their progress toward running a 5k by setting personal lap goals.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What does it mean to be a "Girl on the Run"?
2. What are some of the ways you show everyone that you are choosing to be a Girl on the Run?
3. Do we sometimes do things without thinking about them? What is something that you do every day without thinking about it? (You can also answer this question)
4. Why is it important for us to think about why we do the things we do instead of just doing them?
5. What is your goal for this lesson? (Goal: Talk to someone at home or school about a choice you think you are good at and another choice that you are still working on.)
6. Let's each share a Girls on the Run choice we are good at and one we are still working on.

LESSON 3: STAR POWER

In today's lesson, the girls are learning about the concept of visualization

– imagining something in their minds. The coaches lead them through a visualization that reinforces the difference between positive and negative thinking. The group is also continuing to build relationships and further establish trust with one another.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is visualization? Try to describe the Girls on the Run visualization that your coach did today.
2. What is the bright star within you?
3. How do we feel when we let our stars shine brightly?
How do we feel when dark clouds cover our stars?
4. Is it our choice to let our stars shine brightly? How can we help each other when dark clouds cover our stars?
5. Did you add something to your Identity Card today? What did you add?
6. Did you learn a new energy award today? Would you be willing to show me that award or make up one of your own?

LESSON 4: SELF-TALK MATTERS

Today's lesson educates the girls about self-talk. Self-talk is what we think in our mind about ourselves or say aloud to others about ourselves. The girls share examples of positive and negative self-talk and learn tactics to recognize and eliminate negative self-talk. They also play games that reinforce using positive self-talk.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is negative self-talk?
2. Have I ever said anything that you think is negative self-talk?
3. Where do you think negative self-talk comes from?
4. Can you think up a signal or sound we can use if we catch each other saying something negative about ourselves?
Let's try it!
5. Since we can choose our thoughts, let's each say something positive about ourselves! Now let's give ourselves an energy award for being positive! What award would you like to do?

LESSON 5: UNTANGLING OUR EMOTIONS

Today's lesson is about emotional health. The girls explore different kinds of emotions and discuss how uncomfortable emotions, such as anger, sorrow, and frustration make them feel. They are also learning the importance of being able to identify their emotions. Lastly, they are discussing methods to effectively manage their emotional responses.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What are some examples of emotions? Are there any "bad" emotions? (There are not – emotions are just comfortable or uncomfortable)
2. What happens if we feel like we can't express some of our emotions?
3. Why is it important to let our friends and family feel all of their emotions, even if it makes us uncomfortable?
4. Have you ever had a feeling inside, but you didn't know what emotion it was? You can share your own story.
5. One thing you learned today was the importance of taking in a deep breath and 'being' with a feeling to figure out exactly what it is. Then you can figure out what it is you are feeling. Let's do that now. Let's take a minute to be quiet, breathe deeply and then share what we are feeling.

LESSON 6: HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE

The girls are learning in today's lesson about the importance of healthy nutrition and healthy habits such as regular physical activity and sleep. During the workout, the importance of "pacing" is examined. This lesson offers an excellent opportunity for parents/caregivers to discuss the importance of "balance". A balanced lifestyle represents a happy medium in all aspects of life – physical and mental – which do not fall to either side of the extreme.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What are some of our favorite fruits and vegetables?
2. What do you think represents a balanced meal?
Why is it important for us to eat balanced meals?
3. Is it hard to always eat healthy foods? Why? (There is room for nearly all foods in your diet, but the key is moderation!)
4. How much physical activity should kids do each day? (60 minutes)
5. Why is it important to be physically healthy?
6. What is one thing that you plan to do to improve upon your nutrition and/or healthy habits?

LESSON 7: ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

The concept of seeking gratitude is one from which people of all ages can benefit. In today's lesson, the girls are introduced to the idea that seeking gratitude for our circumstances, whatever they may be, is a simple choice. The girls are also learning to understand that seeking gratitude provides a positive perspective or outlook. Finally, they are beginning to connect an attitude of gratitude with helping others and making a positive impact on the world. Today's lesson also gives the girls a chance to run their farthest distance yet.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. "Gratitude is an Attitude." What does that mean to each of us?
2. Let's take turns and each name three things (or people) for which we are grateful.
3. Let's share three things about ourselves for which we are grateful.
4. Finally, let's tell each other why we are grateful to have each other in our lives.
5. Why is feeling gratitude a choice and not just something that happens?
6. How can an attitude of gratitude motivate us to impact our world in a positive way?
7. Did you set a lap goal today? Did you meet your goal? (Be sure to reinforce effort and personal improvement.)

LESSON 8: FINDING MY HAPPY PACE

The primary learning goal of today's lesson is to identify how running can be a form of relaxation as well as a time for self-reflection. The importance of developing a strong sense of self is also reinforced. Lastly, stretching and breathing techniques that can aid in relaxation are introduced.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Why is it difficult for people to slow down and find quiet time?
2. Why is quiet time, without video games, television, cell phones or other distractions important to our health?
3. Sometimes walking/running can be a time for quiet reflection. Let's walk without talking for a while and see how it feels.
4. Do you prefer walking/running with or without talking?
5. Let's each make a plan to include quiet time in our daily life. How much do we need? How can we do it?

LESSON 9: REAL BEAUTY

Today the girls are exploring a new definition of beauty – inner beauty. They are discussing what makes them beautiful on the inside. The importance of thinking positively about ourselves is explored as well. Today the girls share if they have ever seen a beautiful sunset, heard a beautiful song, heard beautiful words, and smelled a beautiful smell, as a way to identify different types of beauty.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Let's each share how we define beauty.
2. Do you think you can understand a person's character by how they look? Why or why not?
3. Let's each share something that we feel makes us beautiful on the inside. (Not physical traits, but character traits such as kindness, honesty, patience)
4. Now let's each share something about each other that we think is positive and beautiful.
5. What if someone became your friend but never actually saw you. No pictures, nothing. How would you want them to describe you?
6. Why is it important to value who we are on the inside more than the way we look on the outside?
7. Do you have a goal to complete before next session? What is it? (Goal: Ask someone how they define beauty. Then share the different real beauty characteristics we talked about during the lesson.)

LESSON 10: LET'S COOPERATE

In today's lesson, the girls are learning what cooperation means. They are engaging in activities that reinforce the importance of cooperation. The girls are being given opportunities to apply cooperative skills to different situations that require communication to complete a task. The group is discussing ideas for their community impact project.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is cooperation? How can cooperation be beautiful?
2. Are there actions we can choose that build more cooperative circumstances? (Listening, being helpful, having a positive attitude, etc.)
3. Sometimes cooperating with others can be difficult. Tell me about the game you played today and how you practiced cooperation.
4. How do you and I cooperate every day?
5. Let's both name an area where we could each cooperate a little bit better.
6. Let's think about areas where we are grateful that people cooperate and share them with one another. (This could be in your family, your neighborhood, your community or in the world.)
7. What ideas did your group come up with for your Community Impact Project?

LESSON 11: I CHOOSE TO Stop and take a BrThRR

The girls are gaining a better understanding of peer pressure in today's lesson. They are exploring and discussing areas where people succumb to peer pressure and learning a specific strategy to resist it. The Stop and take a BrThRR (breather) strategy, which stands for Stop, Breathe, Think, Respond and Review, encourages the girls to take a step back from a situation to fully assess how they feel, rather than making a split-second decision.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is peer pressure?
2. Let's each name a time when we felt peer pressure and share how we responded to it.
3. Why does standing up to Peer Pressure take confidence? What are some things we can do each day to help build up our confidence? I'll share a couple then you can.
4. Today you learned about the Stop and take a BrThRR Strategy. Do you remember what Stop and take a BrThRR stands for? (Stop, Breathe, Think, Respond and Review). Will you tell me about it?
5. I'm going to share with you something that I feel pressured to do by my peers. I'm then going to use the Stop and take a BrThRR strategy and see how I respond.
6. Let's talk about other times we have felt peer pressure. How could this strategy help us in those situations?

LESSON 12: LET'S PLAN

The girls are learning strategies for group decision making today. They are putting the strategies into practice as they plan the games/activities for the day and decide what Community Impact Project they would like to conduct as a Girls on the Run team. Earlier in the season the girls identified issues/causes that mattered to them. Then they brainstormed project ideas. Today they are evaluating their ideas and making a decision about the community impact project.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What decisions did you make with your Girls on the Run team today? How did you make those decisions?
2. I understand you decided on your team's community impact project today. What did the group decide to do?
3. Do you think it's more challenging to make a decision on your own or with a group? Why?
4. Let's think about a time when we have made a decision together.
5. What kind of impact can a group make on the community that one person cannot? (Talk about the idea of power in numbers).
6. Now let's talk about another time we have worked with a group to make a decision at home, work/school, or in our neighborhood.
7. Do you have a goal to accomplish before next lesson? What is it? (Goal: Think of your unique gifts and talents and identify one way you can contribute to the Community Impact Project.)

LESSON 13: IT TAKES COURAGE

In today's lesson, the girls are learning to assert themselves in a healthy manner. A technique for constructively expressing one's feelings using "I statements" is reviewed and the girls have the opportunity to practice it by role playing with one another.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What does it mean to stand up for ourselves?
2. What are the four key phrases to use when you want to stand up for yourself? ("I feel", "When you", "Because", and "I would like for you to.")
3. Let's each think of and share a time when we could have used these statements. (For example, "I feel frustrated, when you leave your cereal bowl on the table after eating because it shows a lack of concern for keeping our home clean. I need for you to put your dishes in the dishwasher when you finish eating from now on.")
4. What can happen if we don't let someone know that he or she is doing something that hurts or offends us?
5. Let's each share some things that stop us from standing up for ourselves or others.
6. Why is standing up for ourselves important even though it's difficult at times?
7. Let's see if we can think of a time we've seen someone stand up for themselves and it made an impression on us. (You can start by sharing an example from your life, literature, history, movies, etc.)

LESSON 14: PUTTING AN END TO GOSSIP

The topic of lesson 14 is gossip. The girls are learning to better understand the consequences of gossip and discussing how gossiping not only hurts the person about whom the gossip is being spread but also the person who is spreading it. Games and activities include methods to stop gossip from occurring or spreading further.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is gossip? (Gossip is spreading rumors, embellishing stories, sharing with others what has been told to you in confidence and/ or talking behind someone's back. It is anything that is said about someone that you would not feel comfortable saying directly to them.)
2. Why do you think people enjoy gossiping?
3. What is the easiest way to stop a gossip chain? (Use the Stop and take a BrThRR method to come up with a response so that the gossip is stopped)
4. Tell me about the telephone game. What happened?
5. How can you help support someone who is the victim of gossip? (You can share a story about either being a victim or supporting someone or about spreading gossip and how you learned its harmful effects.)
6. How does gossip break connections between people?
7. Let's each describe how we would feel if someone were gossiping about us.

LESSON 15: BEING A STAND-BYER

In today's lesson, the girls are learning to recognize common bullying behaviors. They are also discussing tactics to employ in the event that they are being bullied or are witnessing someone else being bullied. The girls are encouraged to utilize the "Stop and take a BrThRR Strategy" learned in previous lessons when facing potential bullying situations. Stop and take a BrThRR stands for Stop, Breathe, Think, Respond, Review.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is bullying? (Physical - hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, locking people in or out or making mean faces. Verbal - calling names, teasing or putting others down. Emotional - spreading rumors, making fun of others or intentionally excluding people.) *Note: cyber (internet) bullying is growing as well and includes threatening or abusive text messages, social media posts and/or e-mails, forwarding private communications to larger groups and altering online information.*
2. Why is it important to treat others the way we want to be treated?
3. If someone is bullying you by spreading a rumor about you, what would you do? (Stop and take a BrThRR Strategy, tell an adult)
4. Have you or any of your friends at school ever experienced bullying? What happened?
5. What are some different ways you can respond to bullying?
6. What does it mean to be a stand-byer when it comes to bullying?
7. Tell me about the imagery of the dark cloud covering

LESSON 15: BEING A STAND-BYER

your shining star. (This refers to bullying and its impact.)

8. Can you share with one or two of the bullying situations that were most powerful from today and how you would like to respond?
9. Would you feel comfortable coming to me (or other caregiver) if you were being bullied? This is an opportunity to discuss your daughter's response. If not, is there another trusted adult (auntie, uncle, grandmother, older sister) we could designate to be the person you will talk to if bullying is happening to you?

LESSON 16: “BEST” FRIENDS

There are several learning goals incorporated into this lesson. The first is to allow the girls the opportunity to discuss and identify the kinds of qualities one seeks in friends. The second is to examine difficult situations that young girls can face when in a friendship. The final learning goal is to learn why it is important to be intentional when choosing and cultivating our friendships.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. There is an expression called “people pleasing.” Do you know what this means? Why is it okay to not be friends with everyone? (People pleasing is when we stop standing up for what we believe in and alter our behavior in order to be liked by others.)
2. Have you ever met someone and you just didn’t get along with them? Why do you think that happens?
3. Let’s share some of the qualities that we look for in a friend.
4. Now let’s each say the name of one of our best friends and share why we choose to be friends with them.
5. How do we feel when we are with our best friends? Do we feel like the star within us is shining brightly? Isn’t that what true friends do for us?
6. What makes you a good friend? Share some qualities that make you a good friend.
7. Why is it important to have qualities we look for in friends? (If we don’t, we will accept anyone who comes along. We need to have standards of what is important to us.)

LESSON 16: "BEST" FRIENDS

8. When do you think it's okay to end a friendship? (You might share a time you had to end a friendship and why.)

9. Next time you are going to do your practice 5k. What are some of the things you have learned and experienced at Girls on the Run and at home that have helped you prepare to run a 5k?

LESSON 17: PRACTICING OUR 5K

Today the girls will be building their confidence for the end-of-season 5k by completing a practice 5k (3.1 miles) with their teammates.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Wow! Today you had your first chance to try and run a whole 5k! How did it go?
2. How are you feeling about your effort today?
3. Are you planning to do anything differently at the final 5k event?
4. I know pace is important in running that far. What was your pace like today? Was your breathing okay? How far did you run? (Be sure to focus on effort and personal improvement.)

LESSON 18: POWER UP

In this lesson, the girls are learning about the various ways that the media, entertainment and advertising industries portray girls and women. They are also engaging in activities designed to elevate their critical thinking skills, reducing the impact of negative or unrealistic images/messages on their self-esteem.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Today you talked about advertisements and the messages we receive from the media. What was the most interesting thing you learned?
2. How do many advertisers portray women in their ads? Why do you think they do that?
3. Let's each talk about what makes a person beautiful. (What's on the inside!)
4. How do the images we see and the words we hear relate to how we feel about ourselves?
5. Let's try to be more aware of the ads we see in magazines and on TV, ok? If we see something that portrays girls or women in a negative way or with negative self-talk, let's point it out and talk about it.
6. Is there a way we could be more proactive when it comes to the media and the images of girls and women and the products we buy? What are some actions we can take to focus more on the products, movies, television that celebrate girls and women for who they really are?

LESSON 19: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The concept of community is the topic of discussion in today's lesson. The girls are learning about the different kinds of communities and the valuable role that we all play in creating these communities. The girls are also continuing to think about the Community Impact Project they will conduct as a Girls on the Run team.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is a community?
2. Why does a healthy community strive to ensure that all members have the tools they need to be strong and independent?
3. How is our home a community? How do we strive to make sure all our members are healthy and strong? Let's name all our members and talk about each.
4. Can you think of a situation in our neighborhood/school/town where some members need help? What do they need in order to live a healthy life?
5. Let's each share an issue that we care deeply about with one another. (i.e., environment, animals, equality, peace, etc.)
6. Everyone is unique. We each have strengths in some areas and we each struggle in other areas. What is one of your strengths that you can use to address the issue that you care deeply about?

LESSON 20: DESIGNING OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT

Today the girls are planning for their Community Impact Project. As a team, they are finalizing how the project will be structured and determining how they will each use their unique gifts and talents to contribute to the project.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What specific responsibilities do you have with the project?
2. Do you need to bring or prepare anything to carry out your role?
3. How do you feel knowing that you are helping someone or something by doing this project?
4. Can you imagine a role or profession for yourself in the future where you would have an impact on the community/world? Maybe when we get home we could do research on the ideas you are interested in pursuing for a career.
5. Who benefits when doing a community project like this? The people receiving or the people giving?
6. Can you think of anything that the two of us could do together to positively impact our community?

LESSON 21: USING OUR STAR POWER

Today the girls are performing and completing their community impact project.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. How did your project go today?
2. How did it feel to do something to help another person or group of people?
3. I am so proud of you for giving back in this way! What have you learned about yourself while doing this project?
4. Would you like to do something like this again? What sort of project could we do together?
5. What group could we help?

LESSON 22: HOW WE SHINE

The Girls on the Run season is nearing its end and today the girls are beginning the closure process with one another. It is a special time for them to acknowledge and celebrate their time with one another. They are also recognizing and honoring the strengths and talents of their teammates.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Tell me about the games you played today.
2. What are some of the words that the girls said about YOU?
3. Can we play a game that is similar? Let's enthusiastically shout words to each other that express what we love about one another!
4. Let's each share how we feel right now after hearing those words.

LESSON 23: OUR GOTR TOOLBOX

Today is the last official day of Girls on the Run before the closing celebration. The girls are reviewing what they learned during the season. They are also sharing what they enjoyed and did not enjoy about Girls on the Run.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. What is one word you can think of that best describes your experience at Girls on the Run?
2. What are some of the tools in your GOTR toolbox? (These can be things she learned in general or specific strategies such as Stop and take a BrThRR.)
3. How do you feel now that Girls on the Run is almost over?
4. Do you feel like you are ready for the 5k? (if you are running the 5k together, share how you are feeling as well.)
5. What did you like the most about Girls on the Run?

LESSON 24: THE FINISH LINE IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Girls on the Run coaches determine how their team will celebrate the final day. It is an opportunity for the coaches to publicly share positive thoughts about each girl and to honor each participant's unique gifts and talents. It is a joyous occasion filled with love and laughter.

Questions & Conversation Starters:

1. Today was your last day at Girls on the Run. What are you feeling right now?
2. It has been such an honor for me to watch you growing and learning over the last weeks. What can the two of us do together right now to honor and remember this moment for the rest of our lives? (Take a photo, write together in a journal, light a candle, designate a symbol to remind you of the moment – a tree, for example, if you are walking)
3. Let's always remember this moment and how good we feel right now. Everyone has times when they feel great and other times when they feel down. It's not always easy, but I do know that being grateful and reminding ourselves of how beautiful we are is something we can choose to do at any time if we want to.
4. Let's think of a small physical gesture (thumbs-up, a snap, a quick clap, a wink, etc.) we can do if we are feeling down in the dumps that will remind us of the love and connection we feel right now.